

Cell Phone Safety



Key Facts

- According to the New England Journal of Medicine, people who talk on a cell phone while driving are four times more likely to get into a motor vehicle accident. This risk is similar to the hazard associated with drunk driving.
- According to the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis, 6 percent of yearly U.S. motor vehicle accidents could be attributed to cell phone use, which works out to 2,600 fatalities and 330,000 injuries. Vehicle crashes account for 24 percent of workplace deaths, the highest single cause of on-the-job fatalities.

Cell Phone Safety Tips

- Make sure your cell phone is located within comfortable reach in your usual driving position and as close as possible to your line of vision.
- Know all the operations of your cell phone and learn to use it without looking.
- Keep your attention on the road by programming frequently called numbers into the phone's memory to minimize dialing.
- Use your voice mail to take calls or leave yourself messages. Never take notes while driving.
- Dial sensibly. Wait for a stoplight, pull off the road to dial or ask a passenger to dial for you. Be careful about where you stop to make calls.
- Do not use your cell phone in distracting traffic situations.
- Keep conversations brief so you can concentrate on your driving. If a long discussion is required, if the topic is stressful or emotional, or if driving becomes hazardous, end your call and continue the conversation when you are not in traffic.
- If you must use your cell phone while driving, use a hands-free model. A hands-free unit lets you keep both hands on the wheel while you talk on the phone.
- Do not charge your cell phone when using jumper cables; the power surge could burn out your phone.

- When calling 911 to report an emergency, be prepared to provide the closest major cross streets or off-ramps, and your cell phone number.

Calling 911 on Your Cell Phone

Law enforcement suggests calling 911 from your cell phone only in true emergencies:

- Collisions
- Any life-threatening event
- Any crime against you or another person
- A vehicle or object blocking traffic lanes
- A suspected drunk driver

Do not use 911 for situations such as:

- A stalled vehicle off the roadway
- A broken-down vehicle that is not a hazard
- Winter road conditions
- A stolen vehicle when nothing is known about the suspected thief
- Asking for directions
- Testing your phone

When you dial 911, the call from your cell phone is routed to the appropriate emergency response authority. Be prepared to provide:

- Exact location of vehicle in distress
- Nature of emergency
- Your name and cell number, including area code

If you drive with a cell phone, avoid unnecessary calls and always make driving your top priority.

Adapted from the American Automobile Association.

Existing Florida Laws Regarding Mobile Phone Use While Driving

Statute	Provision	Penalties
FS 316.304	Requires that drivers who use a head set with a mobile phone while driving must use	\$30 for each violation;

FS 316.0075	<p>a head set that provides sound through one ear and allows surrounding sound to be heard with the other ear.</p> <p>Operator use of commercial mobile radio services and electronic communications devices. Regulation of operator or passenger use of commercial mobile radio services and other electronic communications devices in a motor vehicle is expressly preempted to the state.</p>	<p>non-moving violation.</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
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